

LA County Health Agency
Integration Advisory Board
Subcommittee on Homelessness

1ST Report

to IAB

January 27, 2016

Chair- General Jeff (Skid Row)
Member- Enrique Peralta (Pico Rivera)



Los Angeles Times

Credit: [Al Seib](#) /
Contributor

**LOS
ANGELES,
CA –**

General Jeff, right, a skid row resident and community activist shakes hands with United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro, middle, and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, left, as they met at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration Tuesday October 20, 2015 to discuss homelessness. The meeting, intended as an 'exchange of ideas' on the state of homelessness in Los Angeles, was attended by members of the LA County Board of Supervisors and a few City Council members. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)

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OVERVIEW

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) updated its official Federal definition of homelessness in January, 2012, (Section 103 of Subtitle I of the McKinney-Vento Act). This “most recent” definition includes four broad categories: People who are living in a place not meant for Human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided.

On August 11, 2015, the LA County Board of Supervisors (BOS) directed the LA County Interim CEO to convene a temporary Integration Advisory Board (IAB) to report in writing on the impact (positive or negative) of the newly-formed Health Agency on on-going Departmental activities and operations, and on achieving the County’s health-related priorities, one of which is to combat growing homelessness across the region.

Consumer representatives on the IAB were also directed/invited to include comments as it relates to their particular area of focus.

On October 29, 2015, the IAB convened it's first-ever meeting. The appointees were confirmed.

On November, 23, 2015, the IAB convened it's second-ever meeting. During this meeting, two specific motions were filed. One was to create a Subcommittee on Homelessness. The second was to approve IAB member General Jeff as the Chair of said Subcommittee. Both motions were unanimously approved by all IAB members in attendance.

Without any specific directions/instructions in the original BOS motion (regarding the creation of the Health Agency) as to the duties of subcommittees, the Chair then initiated a unique, yet effective, method which will provide the IAB with a vast amount of real-time information for the sole purpose of establishing a baseline from which the IAB will be able to make unwavering determinations specifically related to the homelessness portion of the newly-created Health Agency's "Strategic Priorities".

It was implied and understood during the November 23, 2015 IAB meeting that each subcommittee Chair had the freedom and

responsibility to deliver the desired and necessary information in the best interest of the IAB.

This subcommittee report fully accomplishes its task at hand and within a timely manner.

With homelessness across Los Angeles County in need of immediate solutions, we feel strongly that our Subcommittee has performed with a “sense of urgency” comparable to the needs of our homeless constituents during the current El Niño weather conditions.

On December 22, 2015, as Chair of the IAB Subcommittee on Homelessness, I convened a JOINT MEETING in Skid Row, along with the Skid Row Neighborhood Council-Formation Committee (of which I am also Chair).

This report will include excerpts from said joint meeting, including comments/feedback we received directly from Skid Row residents and homeless persons. It should be noted that Skid Row is commonly known as “the homeless capitol of America”. We felt strongly about having our very first Subcommittee on Homelessness meeting in Skid Row and are extremely satisfied that the

Skid Row homeless community in attendance equally felt the same way.

Immediately after our presentation to our fellow IAB members, we anticipate swift action in the form of supporting the information we have provided and moving this report forward in it's entirety directly to the BOS so that they can also benefit from our real-time information collected directly from many homeless residents residing in the homeless capitol of America- Skid Row.

There will also be input and analysis from the esteemed Dr. Diane Woods who was the lead researcher for the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP)- African American Population Report. This will assist in establishing the mental health evaluation in our report and/or by our Subcommittee. It should also be noted that the majority of the residents and homeless population in Skid Row are African-American.

In addition, supportive documents from various town hall meetings, neighborhood council meetings and government meetings we attended across LA County, all with a focus on homelessness, are included to show our

widespread approach to including as many communities as possible in our report.

Moving forward, we intend to include the collective voice of many more communities within LA County as it pertains specifically to homelessness.

As consumer representatives on the IAB, it is extremely important that we exhaust every possible opportunity to include our fellow LA County residents, specifically homeless persons, in this first report- which in and of itself is historic in nature.

We are forever grateful for this opportunity to be heard.

CURRENT STATE OF HOMELESSNESS

With there being a reported 10 million residents living within LA County, included are a reported 45,000 homeless men, women and children (as of January, 2015).

In Skid Row, on the eastern side of Downtown Los Angeles, it is reported as many as 7,000 homeless residents reside on the sidewalks, in tents, makeshift encampments, in missions, shelters and temporary SRO transitional housing units.

In addition, there are a reported 6,000 formerly homeless residents who reside in permanent supportive housing SRO units and also regular renters and even loft owners within Skid Row's 50-block community.

While Skid Row lacks a Community Master Plan, there are "Affordable Housing Covenants" which protect the low-income housing units for up to 55 years from being converted into any other type of housing.

Unfortunately, while said covenants protect Skid Row's residents from returning to homelessness, there aren't enough housing units to adequately accommodate the vast amount of homeless persons in the area, nor are there any signs of new construction of low-income housing units anywhere in Downtown LA. Also, there are NO

low-income family housing units for homeless families in Skid Row.

Using a simplified mathematical formula, if there are 45,000 homeless persons and families in LA County and each building was to house 100 homeless persons, it would take 450 buildings in order to house them all.

If ACTION is not taken immediately, these numbers will continue to rise, thus making it virtually IMPOSSIBLE to realistically imagine an end to homelessness in LA County!

With the recent release of LA County's "Homeless Initiative" which is a comprehensive, detailed plan to strategize on how best to address homelessness, we have determined that while it includes many never-before-seen proposed complex actions from both the County and City of Los Angeles, there is ZERO mention of what areas within LA County the much-needed 450 buildings (previously established) would be constructed in. How, then, can a fair and accurate determination be made if the priority consensus is to provide housing plus services to ALL homeless persons and families within LA County?

Without the necessary housing (think: 450 buildings) established from the beginning, NO subsequent conversation regarding solutions to homelessness can have the merit to justify it's purpose.

If the current political climate is to develop the necessary "political will" to make serious end roads towards "ending homelessness", accurate depictions MUST be continuously made and publicly made at the same time in order to bring all concerned entities- individuals, families and organizations alike- "up to speed" regarding the true solutions and remedies it will take to end homelessness in LA County.

Without this level of commitment and inclusion, there is no solution good enough to make a difference, which thereby means there is a STRONG potential for homelessness to reach a permanent "state of perpetuity" across LA County.

“HOMELESS INITIATIVE”- CONCERNS

In our attempt to provide accurate feedback for the LA County “Homeless Initiative” strategic plan, it MUST be duly noted that said plan document was publicly released on January 7, 2016. We are now providing feedback less than three weeks after said release date. With over 110 pages to review, there simply isn’t enough time to properly respond to all the areas of concern. It should also be noted that the “public feedback period” ended on January 21, 2016, only two weeks after the initial public release. While the expedited process may be appreciated by some, a normal review period is usually 30 days. A document as extensive as the “Initiative” should especially take into consideration that the City of Los Angeles also released their strategic plan on the same day (January 7, 2016) and it is over 220 pages. Combined, that’s over 300 pages to review in less than a two-week period. The City of LA homeless strategic plan is mentioned because both LA County and City of LA officials stated that both plans coincide with one another. Therefore, both documents must be reviewed in order to properly

gauge the completeness of the totality within each of these plans.

That said, here are our initial thoughts/feedback for the LA County “Homeless Initiative” (which has a direct connection to the Health Agency’s “Strategic Priorities”, hence our need to include our feedback on both in this report).

“HOMELESS INITIATIVE”- FEEDBACK

Again, with such a limited timeframe for review to properly provide in-depth feedback, here is a partial response to the LA County “Homeless Initiative”.

POSITIVE feedback includes;

- 1) Priority strategy E8- Keep emergency shelters open 24/7
- 2) Priority strategy F1- Countywide SB2 strategy

3) Priority strategy E4- First Responders Training-
for law enforcement and other first-responders

4) Priority strategy E5- Develop a
decriminalization policy

5) Strategy F5- Linkage Fee Nexus Study

NEGATIVE feedback includes;

1) NO strategy (priority or otherwise) in the
“Initiative” related to collaborating directly with
community-based organizations (CBO’s) working
with homeless adults and families. Only strategy
including CBO’s is working with transitional-age
youth (TAY).

2) Strategy E9- Discharge Data Tracking System-
While this particular strategy is not a violation of
the Privacy Act of 1974, it is not realistic to think
that homeless persons (or homeless advocates)
will go along with being tracked AFTER being
discharged from a facility, which thereby would
create a systemic waste of taxpayer money.

3) NO reference to SB 82 (Mental Health Wellness Act of 2013) in regards to ANY mental health-related solutions for homelessness.

More NEGATIVES can be provided with additional time to review all necessary documents. We hope more review time is granted PRIOR to BOS implementation vote in order for our Subcommittee to offer our advisory assistance with creating a final strategy which both provides and delivers the best options that address homelessness throughout LA County.

“STRATEGIC PRIORITIES”- FEEDBACK

The following is the “initial” feedback to the LA County Health Agency’s “Strategic Priorities”;

1. Homeless Evictions- Nowhere in the “Initiative” is there ANY data regarding “homeless evictions and/or formerly homeless evictions”. There is a HIGH-concentration of low-income tenants who return to being homeless when they are evicted. Also, there is a high number of those

who reside in missions and shelters who also experience “eviction” back to the streets.

Recommendation: More extensive data MUST be compiled regarding evictions of formerly homeless persons and families which automatically return them to being homeless. This act can be referred to as “homeless recidivism”.

Follow-up thought: How long is a homeless person and/or family housed before they are no longer deemed homeless? If a homeless person is housed for 30 days, are they counted as being housed, even if they were homeless for years prior to this housing attempt? And what if they are evicted on that 31st day, do they still count as having been housed?

2. Outreach- How can BOS adequately evaluate street outreach efforts? What protections can be implemented to safeguard against paid outreach workers who simply walk around without actually engaging the homeless? Or without the necessary vigor to have a positive impact that can be reflective in the data?

Recommendation: Need to create an incentive-based formula to reward outreach workers who successfully assist homeless persons/families using provable methods.

Recommendation: Use CES database (or similar County-controlled tool) to track performances of outreach workers, with incentives for those who achieve best outreach performances.

3. Medical- How are homeless persons/families living outdoors made fully aware of Medi-Cal, Medicaid, Affordable Care Act and other medical options in a way that they are encouraged to take one of these preferred routes instead of emergency room visits?

Recommendation: Need for specialized outreach workers who are able to take the time to explain in detail any and all medical options to homeless persons/families PRIOR to actual medical emergencies.

Recommendation: A County-wide accepted medical health card for all homeless persons/families. With a photo ID component and electronic encryption capabilities to allow

for private and sensitive medical history to be contained and protected within the card's memory and remain accessible only to medically-certified and approved LA County personnel and its authorized affiliates.

4. Use “race-equivalent” outreach workers to avoid any racial tensions that may exist within homeless persons/families which will help to build trust and cut down on time-consuming outreach efforts which most often require multiple attempts over extended periods of time to establish a “complete connection”, as opposed to a “partial connection”, even though in some cases a partial connection would be sufficient in order to commence advanced assistive efforts.

5. Need for the creation of a “Countywide Homeless Disaster Plan”- Which would include coordination between first-responders and “homeless point persons” during natural disaster-type emergencies- such as an earthquake, flooding, fire, extreme cold, disease outbreak, etc....Also, free CERT training for homeless point persons, establish

triage locations that homeless are made aware of and complimentary training programs for “homeless leaders”.

6. Need for complimentary dental services- Helps homeless persons/families build self-esteem/confidence, gets them job ready, improves overall health and hygiene...Would require additional space in coordinated type of medical database system (or similar County-controlled tool).
7. Food assistance for homeless persons/families and low-income residents on SSI/SSD- Program would only provide fruits and vegetables and allow ability to purchase soups from commercial food establishments...Would encourage healthier eating habits and healthier lifestyles...As well as increase much-needed nutrients.
8. Need for much stronger detox methods- Narconon is an example of what helps combat heroin overdose....LA County DPH needs to locate/create similar solutions for other addictive drugs (crystal meth, crack cocaine, etc.)....Much more aggressive wellness centers

to provide holistic healing...Would include saunas and spas with mineral waters and proper hydration options.

9. Need for hand-washing stations/hand-washing options to combat the spread of germs and disease which is a SERIOUS public health matter.....(QUESTION:...Where do homeless persons/families wash their hands after relieving themselves?)
10. Need to promote physical exercise in homeless communities (such as Skid Row)- To promote healthier lifestyles and to increase blood flow and create fresh oxygen which then creates potential for better thoughts (positive) and help to alleviate negative habits....Also, homeless NEED positive programming which will help to boost self-esteem, build community and create a sense of inclusion.
11. Create gang intervention programs for homeless gang members- Includes at-risk youth, troubled young adults and former gang members incarcerated in jail or prison who desire a “way out” from a gang lifestyle, thus

reducing the possibility of “gang member recidivism”.

12. Need to establish LA County’s position on hypodermic needle use- As it relates to high-concentration of used needles on the ground in homeless communities (such as Skid Row) (This important topic will be addressed later in this report)

13. Need for LA County to CHALLENGE itself by revisiting any and all pre-existing methods in order of updating “old and outdated” strategies to combat homelessness-

a) DMH- Is current philosophy of administering medical prescriptions adequate?....Are there newer prescription-ready products/medicines/alternative medicines capable of replacing current options?

b) DPH- Need for an improved focus on the environment where homeless reside- quicker response to rid homeless areas of trash and debris...Helps to prevent spread of germs and disease....Reduces the presence of rodents which are known to carry germs and disease.

14. Need to improve ENTIRE case management system

15. Need to improve ENTIRE “outreach” structure/concept

16. Need to include more consumers/end users/homeless community leaders/CBO’s in the “solutions-based process” and decision-making process.....It is a proven method that “success breeds success”With more homeless and low-income persons involved in the decision-making process, their lives will be INSTANTLY improved!....Especially as desired outcomes are achieved!....This success will then “rub off” and positively affect their peers.

OBSERVATION #1

The below news article from 2010 establishes LA County’s past concerns with homelessness.

Back then, it was reported that there were 48,000 homeless in LA County, compared to the over 44,000 in 2015. Multiple BOS members supported a plan to house 12,000 chronically homeless individuals by 2016, along with 6,000 homeless veterans.

Based on these numbers, LA County is at least 8,000 housing units short of reaching its 2010 goal without adding the status of the 6,000 homeless vets.

Official: LA County Can House 12,000 Homeless By 2016

At-risk population estimated at 48,000 December 7, 2010 6:10 PM

Filed Under: [County](#), [Homeless](#), [Housing](#), [Los Angeles](#), [Supervisors](#), [Veterans](#)

LOS ANGELES (CBS) — Finding permanent housing for Los Angeles County's chronically homeless and its military veterans on the streets are top priorities for Board of Supervisors, the panel declared on Tuesday as it gears up to tackle the problem.

The county's homeless population is estimated to be 48,000, and a recent study by United Way of Los Angeles' [Business Leaders Task Force](#) found that it was 40 percent cheaper to house the homeless, rather than to leave them the streets, where they often become ill, or become unstable and get arrested or abused.

Supervisors Zev Yaroslavsky and Mark Ridley-Thomas urged the board to work to find permanent homes for 12,000 chronically homeless individuals and 6,000 newly homeless veterans by 2016.

“With the adoption of (the task force’s) clear goals and aggressive timeline...Los Angeles County will reaffirm that it has both the will and the way to combat this overwhelming but ultimately solvable problem,” said Ridley-Thomas.

Ridley-Thomas said that about 39 percent of the county’s homeless population live on the streets of the county’s 2nd District, which he represents.

The task force report, “Home for Good,” calculates that \$875 million in public [resources](#) is spent annually to manage homeless in Los Angeles County.

Three-quarters of this amount is consumed by the chronically homeless, who make up about one-quarter of the total homeless population, and typically face serious health, mental health or substance abuse problems.

But the resources that reach the homeless are fragmented and focused on transitional shelter, meals and other near-term needs, according to the report.

“We have simply managed homelessness for years, caring for immediate needs, rather than focusing on ending homelessness,” the report concluded.

Instead, the task force recommends, existing resources should be coordinated, combined with state and federal funding, and focused on permanent supportive housing as a first step. Permanent supportive housing combines affordable housing with on-site services, such as mental health treatment, substance abuse prevention, employment opportunities and life training.

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation offered a \$13 million grant to the effort last week and today the board lent its support.

“Our objective here collectively is to see how we can breathe life into this report,” Yaroslavsky said. “Because what differentiates this report from all the others that we’ve seen over the years is that this is real, it’s realistic, it’s doable. Housing 12,000 of the most chronically homeless in Los Angeles County over a period of five years is not a pipe dream.”

Supervisor Michael Antonovich abstained from [voting](#), saying he questioned whether enough qualified professionals could be found to provide effective, comprehensive support for the newly housed veterans and others. He also objected to the focus on vets without consideration for youths transitioning out of foster care. “Dedicating permanent supportive housing to veterans without calling out a priority on transitional youth...is not the best use of scarce taxpayer resources to effectively and [efficiently](#) prevent homelessness for the greatest number of homeless individuals,” Antonovich said. The board, in a 4-0 vote, asked the county’s chief executive office to work with staffers from the health,

mental health and social services departments and the Community Development Commission to find ways to implement the task force recommendations. A report is due back in 30 days.

OBSERVATION #2

The below referenced material is a budgetary message from The White House. We took the liberty of only including the section that relates to homelessness.

Even though it focuses on the 2016 Federal budget, it makes a statement about “ending veterans homelessness by the end of 2015”.

One can quickly and OBVIOUSLY determine that because it is now January, 2016 and there are still homeless vets living outdoors across LA County, even our Federal Government is struggling to properly and successfully address homelessness.

CONCLUSION: LA County MUST rely on its own capabilities as the primary lead agency for “ending homelessness” within LA County. All other efforts

should be reduced to a level of secondary and supportive status.

Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2016

THE BUDGET MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT

To the Congress of the United States:

Ending Homelessness

In 2010, the President set ambitious goals to end homelessness across the Nation, and since then significant progress has been made. Major cities have hit important milestones toward the goals including New Orleans, Louisiana, which has ended veteran homelessness, and Salt Lake City, Utah and Phoenix, Arizona, which have ended chronic homelessness among veterans. Over 300 mayors, governors, and county executives have committed to ending veteran homelessness in their communities through the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.

The overall number of veterans experiencing homelessness has declined by 33 percent—nearly 25,000 veterans—since 2010, and with continued focus from Federal, State, and local partners, **we are on a path to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015.** The Budget continues to make investments to end chronic homelessness in

2017 and to make significant progress in ending homelessness across all other populations. In addition to targeted increases in HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants, the Budget provides 67,000 new Housing Choice Vouchers to support low-income households, including families experiencing homelessness; survivors of domestic and dating violence; families with children in foster care; youth aging out of foster care; and homeless veterans, regardless of their discharge status.

OBSERVATION #3

The 2016 United States Federal budget is over \$4 trillion dollars. The proposed 2016 State of California budget is \$170.7 billion dollars. The 2015-2016 (current) County of Los Angeles budget is \$26.9 billion dollars. The Department of Health Services budget is \$4 billion dollars. The Department of Mental Health budget is \$2 billion dollars. The Department of Public Health is \$1 billion dollars.

REGIONAL MEETINGS ACROSS LA COUNTY

Below is a list of the recent meetings we attended across LA County in which all, either completely or partially, focused on addressing homelessness.

1) October 20, 2015: HUD Secretary Julian Castro met with City and County leaders in Los Angeles to discuss 'state of homelessness' (**See Page 2**)

2) October 22, 2015: California Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing met in City Hall, Los Angeles for Informational Hearing on 'State of Homelessness' in California (Public comment)
http://stran.senate.ca.gov/sites/stran.senate.ca.gov/files/agenda_on_letterhead_-_10.22.15.pdf

3) October 27, 2015: Harbor City Neighborhood Council Ad Hoc Committee on Homelessness (In attendance)
<http://harborcitync.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/OCT-27-2015-Homelessness-Committee-Agenda.pdf>

4) November 5, 2015: Empowerment Congress North Area Neighborhood Development Council (In attendance)
<http://www.nandc.org/2015/11/20/senator-holly-mitchell-brings-news-to-nandc/>

5) November 7, 2015: Empowerment Congress West Area Neighborhood Development Council Town Hall on Homelessness (On panel)

<http://www.ecwandc.org/2015/11/7-town-hall-4/>

6) November 18, 2015: Harbor NC Stakeholder's Meeting- (Agenda Item #4- Presented)

<http://harborcitync.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/NOV-2015-Stakeholder-Agenda-HCNC.pdf>

7) December 17, 2015: Silver Lake NC Town Hall on Homelessness (On panel)

<http://silverlakenc.org/2015/12/homeless-in-silver-lake-town-hall-meeting-contact-list/>

8) December 22, 2015: JOINT MEETING: Skid Row NC- Formation Committee and LA County Health Agency IAB Subcommittee on Homelessness (Chair)

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=972882042806474&id=119654608129226

In summary, multiple communities across LA County continue to struggle while attempting to properly address homelessness. Each of these meetings resulted in the following equally similar outcomes;

- 1) STRONG desires to house their community's homeless and also connect them to the necessary medical care and additional supportive services.

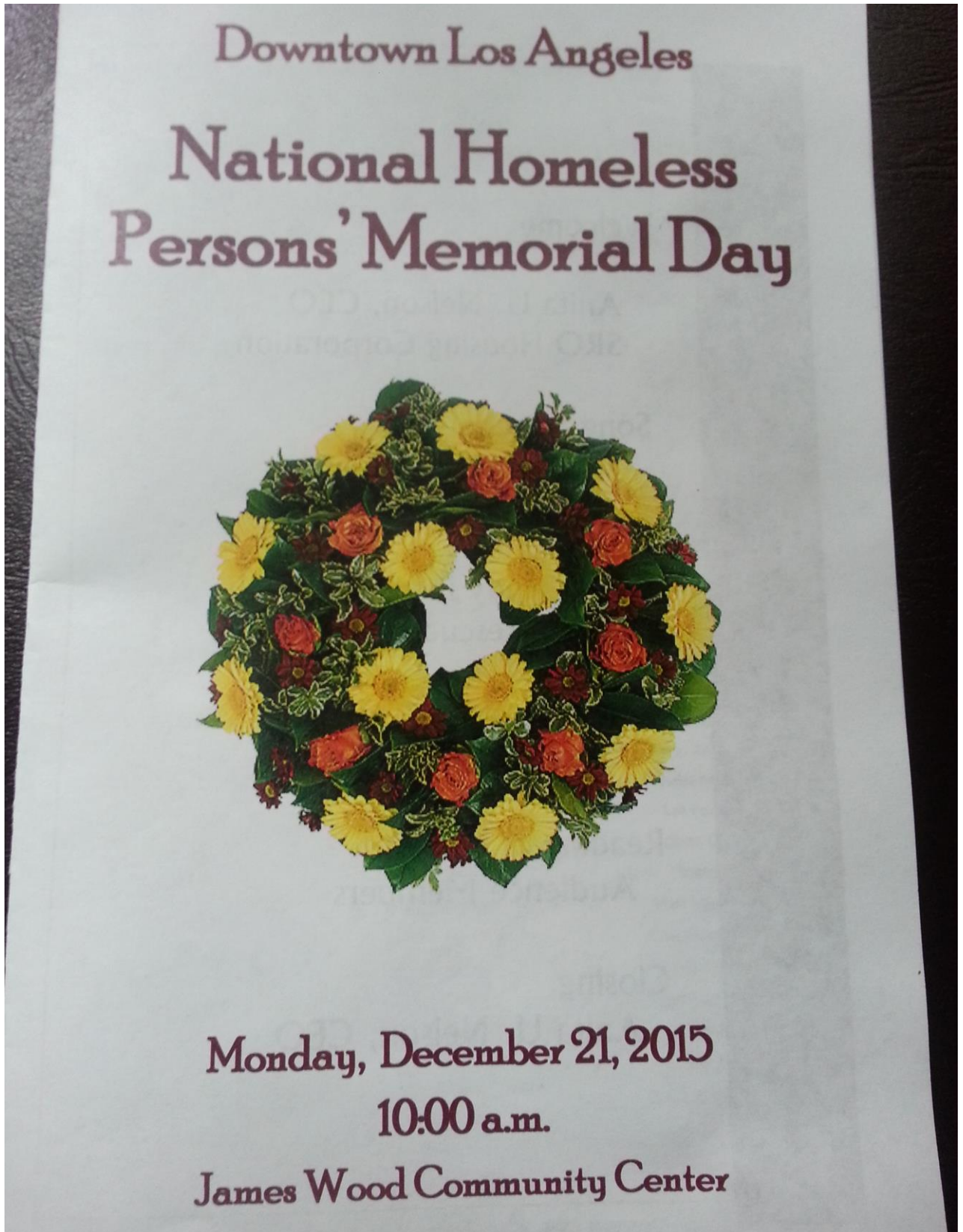
- 2) Wanting real-time information and/or updates from County officials regarding directives on WHAT TO DO?
- 3) Disappointed in the lack of immediate follow-up by LA County departments after bringing the community together to assist in past Homeless Counts.
- 4) Unclear as to why homeless encampments are allowed to continue to exist.
- 5) Unsure of how they can help. (Number one question asked was, “What can we do to help?”)

“National Homeless Persons Memorial Day”

On December 21, 2015, the annual ‘National Homeless Persons Memorial Day’ event was held in Skid Row (See below photo of homeless obituary).

Personal observation (by Subcommittee Chair General Jeff) has noticed that in the last 5 years this event's "read aloud" portion of the program has read over 100 names of individuals who passed each year. With Skid Row legally confirmed and recognized by the City of Los Angeles as a 50-block community, it is then established that there is a constant "death ratio" in Skid Row of more than a 2 to 1 margin.

No other community in America, homeless or otherwise, has a per capita death ratio greater than in Skid Row, Downtown Los Angeles.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Obviously, the weather plays an important role on homelessness since the majority of homelessness is experienced by people trying to survive in the outdoors. The percentage for transfer of germs and disease greatly increases during inclement weather due to increased presence of sickness such as flu, colds and hypothermia, which all greatly compromise one's immune system.

It has been declared by leading weather experts that in 2016, from at least January to March, an El Niño weather season will greatly affect all who experience extended periods of time outdoors, such as homeless persons and families.

An El Niño season is defined as a unique weather pattern that creates "wetter-than-average conditions", throughout LA County in this case.

During El Niño, there MUST be increased concern for homeless persons and families equivalent to a major natural disaster which thereby equates to

heightened potential for widespread sickness and/or death.

We suggest that LA County be aware of any possible lapses of proper outreach in regards to informing homeless persons and families of winter shelters and other resources to help combat current El Niño conditions, including but not limited to;

- A) The address and/or directions to winter shelters/help centers
- B) Transportation to/from winter shelters
- C) Information for any and all possible storage facilities (both temporary and long-term)
- D) Access to food and dry clothing
- E) Medical assistance
- F) Trauma/grief counselors
- G) Opportunity for CES outreach (or similar County-controlled tool) inside of winter shelters/help centers

SKID ROW-SPECIFIC CONCERNS

With Skid Row being the “homeless capitol of America”, we found it necessary to further probe and establish some of the vast number of concerns coming directly from Skid Row residents with the understanding of the concept that “To know the core issues of homelessness in LA County is to speak to its nucleus”.

During our December 22, 2015 JOINT MEETING with the Skid Row Neighborhood Council-Formation Committee in Skid Row, we notated the following perspectives directly from the Skid Row community’s residents and stakeholders themselves;

- 1) There are serious concerns regarding the threat of losing the already too few low-income housing units in and near Skid Row due to what is being called “decentralization” which is a strategy based on reducing the high-concentration of homeless housing and services in one area

and instead spreading it all across the LA County region.

This concern is having a negative mental effect on homeless and low-income residents who fear being **displaced** from familiar territory and subsequently outcast to other areas which are foreign to them, thus causing further mental trauma which then would significantly eliminate any and all potentially successful medically-related treatment, thereby setting the entire process of providing assistance to homeless persons and families back and quite possibly moving in a totally negative direction.

- 2) There were numerous concerns from Skid Row residents regarding the criminalization of homelessness by law enforcement (Los Angeles Police Department), specifically by those suffering from mental illness, extreme poverty, being a minority and/or any combination of the above.
- 3) There is a growing concern for the over proliferation of used hypodermic needles

on Skid Row's streets- a dangerous public health matter!

In 2012, LA County Department of Public Health cited the City of Los Angeles in three categories; 1) For the high-concentration of urine and feces, 2) For the high-concentration of rat infestations, and 3) For the high-concentration of hypodermic needles (See below news article)

L.A. could resume controversial cleanup sweeps in skid row

County health department inspects a nine-block area and finds human waste, injection needles, condoms and a rat infestation in violation of health codes.

June 05, 2012 | By Anna Gorman, Los Angeles Times

Armed with a new county report citing the health dangers of **feces, urine and hypodermic needles** recently found on Los Angeles' skid row, city officials could resume controversial cleanup sweeps of the downtown area's streets and sidewalks.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health inspected a **nine-block area** and discovered **human waste, injection needles, condoms and a rat infestation** in violation of county and state health codes. City officials say

they have cleaned up the **waste and debris** cited by inspectors last month. The county plans to return this week to ensure there are no continuing health threats in the area, which has numerous homeless encampments.

"The **human feces** are certainly very disturbing, as are the **hypodermic needles**," said Jonathan Fielding, the county's top public health official. "The situation appears to have worsened."

Fielding said sidewalks and streets in the inspection area, southeast of City Hall, need to be power-washed weekly and the health conditions monitored closely. **Unsanitary living conditions** and crowding in the camps have **increased the risk of spreading communicable diseases** such as meningitis, which was diagnosed in four skid row residents in March, according to the county inspection report.

The city requested the inspection as part of its battle against a federal court injunction issued last June that has limited sweeps by police and cleanup crews in the area. The public health report documents the problems that have arisen since the court restrictions took effect, said Special Assistant City Atty. Jane Usher.

"From the city's point of view, we have a public health crisis," she said. "There are such vast quantities of materials deposited on the streets and sidewalks."

The injunction restricted police from seizing abandoned personal property from skid row dwellers. The city appealed and the federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals is

weighing the case. Now, the city is working to create protocols that Usher said would strike a balance between following the injunction and ensuring that people can live and work safely in the area.

There is nothing in the injunction that prevents the city from cleaning up **needles, feces or other public health threats**, said Becky Dennison of the homeless advocacy group Los Angeles Community Action Network, which supports the restrictions. "The city should respond with thorough street cleaning and trash collection that respects people's personal property," she said.

City officials complain that when crews try to remove a pile of apparent debris, someone often claims it's his personal property.

Other groups, including the Union Rescue Mission, which provides shelter and other services to the homeless, said the injunction has led to a dangerous buildup of **human waste and trash** on skid row, as police became cautious about touching anything.

"It made you sick to walk down the street," said the Rev. Andrew Bales, who heads the mission.

Regarding hypodermic needles, an example shared during our JOINT MEETING by a concerned Skid Row resident was about the Center for Harm Reduction (CHR) - a clean-needle distribution center in Skid Row. Said

resident stated that CHR's website claimed they have distributed 800,000 clean needles (period unknown). CHR also stated on their website that 500,000 used needles were returned.

Applying deductive reasoning, this means a whopping 300,000 used needles were UNACCOUNTED for.

This is TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE!

This is a SERIOUS public health matter. Also, environmental health and behavioral health concerns exist as well.

These categories fall under the responsibility of LA County's DHS, DMH and DPH agencies.

We hope and expect these life-threatening, health-related matters will be addressed during the integration process of each of these LA County agencies.

“RIP BARBARA BROWN”

In early January, 2016 (three weeks ago) a homeless woman in her 60's named Barbara Brown died on a sidewalk in Skid Row due to hypothermia. She slept outside the low-income SRO building she was evicted from. She had a well-documented history of mental illness and struggled to cope on a daily basis.

After her death it was determined that DMH, LAPD, LAPD's SMART team and other first-responders were contacted to provide assistance to Mrs. Brown. It was also stated by a fellow resident that Mrs. Brown's case worker determined that it was sufficient for her to continue sleeping on the sidewalk since concerned residents were nearby and provided a type of support system. (This has yet to be confirmed by our Subcommittee but we share this information with hopes that LA County agencies with better access to information will act accordingly and reach an accurate determination to be shared publicly).

Only days after the El Niño weather season began, Mrs. Brown was found unresponsive and wrapped in a rain-drenched blanket on the sidewalk.

It has not yet been determined if the system failed her due to ineffective outreach by both LA City/County personnel, an inadequate system in and of itself or a combination thereof.

Mrs. Brown's death is the first of this El Niño season, but should not go in vain and instead her passing should be analyzed in the form of a case study from which an accurate understanding of exactly what happened can be determined (especially if it was the LA County health system which failed her). Subsequently, the necessary life-saving adjustments to the overall health services systems provided by both the LA County and the City of LA can (and should) be made which would then help to prevent similar instances of fatality from reoccurring.

(The below is an LA Times article)

Homeless woman died of exposure on skid row sidewalk during El Niño storm

By Gale Holland

January 9, 2016 8:39 PM



A homeless woman identified as Barbara Brown, shown in a photo taken Christmas Day, died of exposure on a skid row sidewalk, authorities said. (Paul Avila)

A 60-year-old homeless woman **died of exposure** on a skid row sidewalk during Thursday's El Niño storm, authorities said Saturday.

The woman, identified by friends as Barbara Brown, died without a tent, **rain-soaked and wrapped in a wet blanket** on a piece of plastic, witnesses said.

Los Angeles police Capt. Mike Oreb said the woman had refused an offer of shelter from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority **the day before she died.**

At an emotional street memorial for Brown on Saturday, Deacon Alexander, who lives on skid row, said he **called the 911 emergency line** that afternoon and said police should take Brown off the street or "she'll be gone by tomorrow."

Once you're out here for too many years, you're brainwashed into thinking this is life.- Angela Harper, a former skid row resident

The 911 operator told him the police **couldn't take her in without her consent**, Alexander said.

Oreb could not confirm the conversation but said that police would not have been able to order Brown off the street. **"We cannot force her to leave or seek shelter,"** he said. "We can only encourage to seek shelter."

Brown's death came as the city and county, after months of deliberations, released the region's first comprehensive plan in more than a decade for curbing homelessness.

Officials said a task force had been making preparations to safeguard homeless people during the potentially deadly storms.

As the first El Niño rain arrived this week, Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) said L.A. police officers could temporarily detain homeless people illegally camped **near the Los Angeles River** who are in danger but refuse to move.

Garcetti's staff later directed questions about the law under which they could act to the LAPD, which cited a section of the California penal code that allows law enforcement officers to restrict access to perilous areas during disasters.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo last week ordered that homeless people be taken to shelters in freezing weather.

A written statement Saturday evening from Garcetti's office said the city is "**exploring what we can do to help those who refuse assistance**." The Mayor's priority is keeping all Angelenos safe during this storm season and he is urgently doing everything he can to prevent these tragedies from occurring."

Peter Lynn, head of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, said protecting the homeless population is a "top priority among all Los Angeles leadership" and that the agency's winter shelter system, with 7,245 beds, is **not yet at full capacity**.

"We will continue to work daily to **encourage** people to come in," he said.

There was no argument from friends that Brown, who was described as having both drinking and mental health issues, often refused help. One mourner said Brown told police she wasn't homeless; another said Brown spit on her when she brought her a blanket.

Alexander said that on the day of her death, he threw a blanket over her but it quickly became drenched.

"The rain just poured on her," he said during the street memorial on skid row. "I blame myself."

Angela Harper, a former skid row resident who volunteers to help homeless people, said Brown had been in and out of refurbished flophouses on skid row for eight years and **no longer trusted anyone who tried to help her.**

"Once you're out here for too many years, you're brainwashed into thinking this is life," Harper said. **"I blame the system.** What she needed from the beginning, when she was living in SROs, was help with the mental health and drug and alcohol problems."

A resident of the Hotel Ellis next to Brown's spot at Stanford and 6th streets said social workers had **begun to gain her confidence.**

Harper said that although it's too late for Brown, "there's hundreds of her down here."

Other skid row residents recounted bringing Brown food, clothing and a sleeping bag but said all such supplies seemed to evaporate.

Alexander said Brown's tent burned in a fire a year ago and was never replaced.

"General" Jeff Page, who is organizing a skid row neighborhood council, said officials should use Brown's death as a **case study** of how to fix the 50-block community.

"Where's the communication with leaders so we can point out those in need?" Page asked.

Kevin Haah, pastor of New City Church Los Angeles and president of the downtown clergy council, handed out single flowers for mourners to place at the makeshift street shrine where Brown died.

"We don't think this is right," he said. "We pray the people of this city will do something about this place."

RACIAL DISCREPANCIES AND HOMELESSNESS

There is on-going concern, first made public by a non-African-American Skid Row stakeholder, that the decision-making process regarding homelessness doesn't include enough African-Americans. (It must be noted that the demographic population in Skid Row has primarily been African-American since the crack cocaine epidemic in the 1980's)

BOS Ridley-Thomas stated in a recent radio interview on local station KJLH-FM (Inglewood) that the African-American homeless population in Skid Row was "well over 50%".

In 2014, LAPD reported that there were 107 non-profit organizations in or directly connected to Skid Row.

The majority of the CEOs, Executive Directors and upper-level management positions within all Skid Row non-profits are “non-African-American”. There is a definite contrast in the racial make-up of the societal structure in Skid Row.

The above-mentioned racial discrepancies may contribute to the high number of despondents towards the assistance offered by the Skid Row non-profits and social service providers.

An obvious **resolution** to this suspected quandary is for LA County to increase the amount of African-American employees in its homeless efforts across the board, especially as it relates to areas heavily-populated by African-Americans, such as Skid Row and South LA, and also as it relates to upper-level management and high-ranking executive positions.

Further, our Subcommittee strongly suggests that a “race-equivalent ratio” be utilized- from outreach workers to decision-makers- which thereby projects a more visible and positive image towards all minority homeless persons, thus increasing their interest in “trusting the system”

and also favorably receiving the necessary services being provided to them.

The above racial discrepancies may be the cause of the widespread disconnect that continues to plague communities such as Skid Row and South LA as well as others across LA County, such as Harbor City, which only exacerbate the homeless situation instead of helping to greatly reduce it.

Due to the decades-long existence of tens of thousands of minority homeless persons and families, it is now time to address this specific concern as a way of “micro-managing” homelessness.

Further, it should be noted that **Women** (who are identified by society as a minority group) have additional concerns directly associated with homelessness and extreme poverty.

These issues include, but are not limited to;

- 1) Victims of sex trafficking
- 2) Victims of sexual harassment
- 3) Victims of stalking
- 4) Housing being illegally entered

- 5) Fears of being victim to germ warfare through feminine hygiene products
- 6) Rape
- 7) Forced into prostitution
- 8) Forced to do drugs
- 9) Forced to steal
- 10) Forced to hide, hold and/or sell drugs

The above information was gathered from outspoken **Women** in the Skid Row community.

It is always troubling to hear firsthand experiences from **female victims**. We strongly suggest that homeless women's issues be made separate but equal concerns to all others associated with homelessness and extreme poverty, and whenever possible given priority status.

ANALYSIS OF SKID ROW JOINT MEETING

by Dr. Diane Woods, Dr.P.H.

Qualitative Research, Policy Analyst, Community Planning & Development
Assistant Research Psychologist, Department of Psychology
University of California, Riverside

OUR INTRODUCTION:

In using a multi-leveled, analytical approach for this report, our Subcommittee found it necessary to include expert analysis from a public health specialist who can speak to multi-level integration regarding the subjects of mental health, minorities and homelessness which are all vital aspects of our primary areas of focus.

Instead of merely “puling data”, we instead chose to include actual real-time documentation which further validates our own findings in this report.

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Date: December 22, 2015 ~ Time: 6:00pm to 9:30pm

General Jeff, Chair both committees; and Enrique Peralta, IAB Subcommittee Member (absent)

Los Angeles Official: LA County Mental Health Commissioner, Sharon Lyle (attendee)

Analysis by **V. Diane Woods, DrPH**, Community Research, Policy Analyst, Assistant Research Psychologist, UCR

Information extracted from review of videos posted on YouTube; total of 10 videos posted

Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee on Homelessness Discussion	Analysis
General Jeff, Subcommittee Chair	Video9@22:50secs <i>"I want to remind everyone that this is a joint meeting...we are going to switch gears a little bit, so.... We're moving at a Skid Row pace. We have a sense of urgency about us, because we need to make things happen... The County Supervisors have said the IAB needs to give them reports...The IAB's first report is due to the Board of Supervisors(BOS) in March.... We needed to have a meeting and get on the books....That's why I have asked Bobby Buck, and Michael Blaze, and Angela and Tony and folks to take pictures to document this so they will know this is a real live meeting... Because next month in January, both the City of LA and County of LA each are going to unveil their "Comprehensive Homelessness Strategic Plans"... drafts in January and actual plans in February 2016... We wanted to have a meeting now, so we can put our report together to submit it to them, to add it in their reports...."</i>	Skid Row needs require a "Sense of Urgency"

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
Suzette Shaw	Video10@00.43sec <i>“It’s been reported since 2011, that the incarceration rate for people with mental illness has gone up 89% and most of those incarcerated have been for misdemeanors.... That is a huge impetus to draw upon in how the community is policed. How community members are penalized and criminalized for being homeless, for being poor, for being Black, and for being mentally ill.”</i>	High incarceration rates of mentally ill for misdemeanors Implication: criminalization of homeless and poor

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
Red	<p>Video10@01:23secs</p> <p><i>“Decentralization. I read a lot. I read in the Downtown Newspaper they say they have to speak to the other communities. Are you ready to develop a homeless center, shelter center up in your spot? WOW! There go complexities here. Are we Skid Row, or are we going to be splashed across the city?... Anyway, the only thing somebody cares about is having somewhere to live... With Central City asking the other communities.... This is complex... all these other cities have been asked this.... ‘Decentralization Plan’ is a long process.... Decentralizing, that just means to get somebody a pad.... Look, when they ask a person if they want to stay downtown and be homeless, or you want a pad? What do you think they are going to say? ... Get people somewhere to live. But, remember that Skid Row must be considered before implementing commercial projects of housing (long pause) into our community.”</i></p>	<p>Decentralization – displaces the poor and homeless</p> <p>Need affordable housing in Skid Row</p> <p>Get people an acceptable place to live in the Skid Row community</p> <p>Implication: proper acceptable housing ensures stability and healthy sense of community</p>

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
Sylvia	Video10@03:32secs <i>"I heard emergency and I heard El Niño. And, I see a lot of passion from a lot of people here. I just wonder if this could be a good way to start our representation... I'm willing because something needs to be done. Who knows better than community members? I think we need to put our hands in action... It's good that we are here and we need to start putting our hands together, because this is a real <u>state of emergency</u>."</i>	Real "State of Emergency" - right now

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
General Jeff Subcommittee Chair	<p>Video10@04:23secs</p> <p><i>“... When we talk about a sense of urgency here in Skid row, our pace is faster than the rest of the City.... When I first got here in 2006, the pace was slow in City Hall. It was excruciatingly slow at getting anything done. Now we have picked up the pace in Skid Row with OG going hard; me (General Jeff); Tom and Katherine, now; Suzette, now; LA CAN (doing tremendous work they are doing); LA Poverty Department... We have a lot of separate voices that are speaking out loud around a whole lot of different places. We’ve got DWAC... adding the women’s voices to the conversation. There is a <u>sense of urgency coming from us</u>. That’s why it’s important for us to have this meeting. It is important that we get this well documented.... In hopes that they will add our voices to the conversations...”</i></p>	<p>“Sense of Urgency” in Skid Row</p> <p>Skid Row resident community working hard to address issues</p>

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
Sylvia	Video10@07:11secs <i>"I want to go back to what I said. We don't need to be some entity or something that is established where it is in the community when it is already established. And, get a connection with the Fire Department, shelters, or whoever is available. So we can just support the situation."</i>	Need more community collaboration and connection with public establishment

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
Katherine McNenny	<p><i>Video10@07:44secs</i></p> <p><i>“Yeah. I want to make sure this gets on the record... (reading from prepared notes). I am extremely concerned with continuing proliferation of used syringes in the streets of Skid Row. Operations Healthy Streets began in 2012 as a multi-million dollar deep cleaning initiative by the City of Los Angeles after the LA County Health Department cited them for their unsanitary conditions here. Yes, the same conditions persist today with regards to used needles. Anecdotally, I have heard many locals say the problem has gotten worse lately. And, I would agree. As proof of the continuing problems pictures of dozen of used needles found during the most recent Operations Healthy Streets cleaning have been shared on social media by the Los Angeles Police Department. Where are all these needles coming from? Who is supplying them? This is a public health matter! The Center for Harm Reduction, located on 4th Street near Crocker, is the only organization permanently officially in</i></p>	<p><u>Program negligence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unsanitary conditions -Ineffective fiscal accountability -Production of Bio-hazardous waste -Endangerment to human life

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
Katherine McNenny continued	<p><i>Skid Row that passes out needles. Although, it is referred to as needle exchange their own website (thank you, Tom), states that 800,000 needles are distributed but only 500,000 used syringes are returned. I would like your new subcommittee, sir ... to focus on this issue.</i></p> <p><i>Where are the many <u>thousands of needles not being returned, and ending up on the streets of Skid Row</u>, continuing to burden an already over burden, traumatized, and marginalized community? <u>Not done yet....</u> I would like to know what the Center for Harm Reduction in Skid Row can do to assist the collection of used needles in our streets, bathrooms and parks. The Center for Harm Reduction in Skid Row lists the LA Department of Public Health (DPH) as a financial supporter. The Skid Row community continues to be harmed by these decisions. Operations Healthy Streets was initiated based on many years of advocacy by us residents of Skid Row. I understand a large chunk of money being allocated to deep clean our streets is instead being used to pick up used needles on our streets that the LA Department of Public Health is encouraging to be passed out with zero regards to where they end up. Thank you."</i></p>	<p><u>Program negligence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unsanitary conditions -Ineffective fiscal accountability -Production of Bio-hazardous waste -Endangerment to human life <p><i>Implication:</i> improper oversight by DPH</p>

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
General Jeff Subcommittee Chair	<p>Video10@10:16secs</p> <p><i>"This is so powerful....You know that is a serious topic when we talk about healing Skid Row. A lot of fingers get pointed at us ... Historically; it has always been, oh, they are just drunks, bums, and addicts. When you talk about addicts and addiction, its eye opening and earth-shattering and jaw dropping to hear those numbers... That's totally unacceptable!!! There is no other community on this planet that would accept something like that. I am outraged to hear those numbers! And, so we will definitely come back to you guys real soon with some type of action connected to that. So, great work Tom and Katherine."</i></p>	<p>300,000 unaccountable needles and syringes on Skid Row streets from a needle exchange program is <u>UNACCEPTABLE Practice</u></p>
Suzette Shaw	<p><i>"I actually had a tour of the Needle Exchange Center a few weeks ago. And, actually yesterday sent an email to one of the people there, because we spoke about working closely together this coming year... I do have a contact there.... They want to connect more with the community. They are not connected to the community, other than what they do with the needles."</i></p>	<p>Programs in Skid Row <u>need to connect with community</u> – currently do not</p>

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
Andreea Teodorescu	<p>Video10@12:57secs</p> <p><i>"I just want to add... going to these meetings like homeless committee, the Skid Row Housing Trust, there needs to be more representation from Skid Row. More African Americans represented because it is mostly a bunch of White men, males. In the City Council, there is one woman. Like the homeless committee, how come there is no Skid Row representation on that committee? I think going forward, there is a Skid Row Community Council and we are looking forward... right now. We have a formation of the Skid Row Community Council and its going forward."</i></p>	Official meetings about homelessness in Skid Row need more representation from Skid Row
General Jeff Subcommittee Chair	<p>Video10@13:42secs</p> <p><i>"Just to clarify one thing, the City Council and all those committees only involve City Council members. So, there is no public member allowed on those committees.... Unlike the Skid Row Neighborhood Council where we can have Board members and the public involved in our committees."</i></p>	

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
Yvonne Michelle Autry	<p>Video10@14:09secs</p> <p><i>“... I would like to applaud everyone and thank everyone who showed up... Jeff took me to the first meeting....Just for the record, I wanted to mention for the future... I would like to address the issues of sex slaves and sex trafficking for safety... I feel like there is a lot more aggressive harassment stalking right now.... Also, illegal entry incidents where people have had their room entered; germ warfare... It's very strange ... on 5th and Spring. I've had my computer crashed, my keyboard, my DVD player taken... That was just for the record, I would like to address in the future. I'm looking forward again to being on the formation committee for the Skid Row Neighborhood Council... I am glad we are trying to govern ourselves....”</i></p>	<p><u>Problems in Skid Row:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sex slaves- Sex trafficking- Harassment- Illegal entries

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
General Jeff Subcommittee Chair	<p>Video10@15:52secs</p> <p><i>“Thank you. Well said. Great community points being made that must go on record, especially because of unresolved issues... Technically, we’ve got this agenda in regards to the LA County Subcommittee on Homelessness, just for the record we must speak to that. #1. No one from the County showed up... #2. We read a series of emails that cancelled next week’s IAB meeting #3. On this agenda we laid out suggested topics that we wanted a report back on... just quickly:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirm the Skid Row Containment Zone Policy... - Confirm LA County’s Board of Supervisors (BOS) ability to declare a “State of Emergency” type status... - Confirm LA County’s specific roles and duties in LAHSA City & County collaborative..... - Determine how many housing units are needed to build from ground up to house the reported over 44,000 homeless persons in LA County as listed in the LAHSA Homeless Count.... <p>...Any other topics you want to put on the list, that is county related, not city?</p>	Refer to agenda for details

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Additional pertinent comments extracted from Videos 1 to 8, during the Skid Row Neighborhood Council (SRNC) – Formation Committee meeting

Attendees Name	Summary Content SRNC – Formation Committee Meeting	Analysis
General Jeff, Chair SRNC-Formation Committee	Video1@00:52secs <i>“This is a joint meeting of two committees and I happen to be the chair of both... This meeting will speak in-depth about where we are on the formation of the Skid Row Neighborhood Council (SRNC), and the status of homelessness as it relates to downtown both in the City and LA County.... This is NOT a venting session or debate. We are here to exchange information and ideas... To be clear, this is a community meeting about becoming a SRNC. This is a formation committee meeting, so let’s be real clear. The SRNC does not yet exist. Therefore, we are not bound by any governments. However, for the County of LA, I am on the Integration Advisory Board (IAB) for the LA County Health Agency. So, the Subcommittee on Homelessness actually officially exists.</i>	Reference agenda for details

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Attendees Name	Summary Content SRNC – Formation Committee Meeting	Analysis
Woman identified with Doctors without Borders	Video3@02:47secs <i>“I travel all over the world.... I will be very happy to lend my contributions.... The crisis that we see here is really very accurate.... The veterans, the way they are treated here is very hurtful..... This is not only about the personal aspect, but the emotional aspect, and the mental aspect....”</i>	<u>Crisis in Skid Row</u> Real Situation

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Date: December 22, 2015 ~ Time: 6:00pm to 9:30pm

General Jeff, Chair both committees; and Enrique Peralta, IAB Subcommittee Member (absent)

Los Angeles Official: LA County Mental Health Commissioner, Sharon Lyle (attendee)

Analysis by **V. Diane Woods, DrPH**, Community Research, Policy Analyst, Assistant Research Psychologist, UCR

Attendees Name	Summary Content SRNC – Formation Committee Meeting	Analysis
Mello Desire	<p>Video4@00:19secs</p> <p><i>“I am a Skid Row resident for about eight years, now. The problems we would like to fix here in Skid Row are:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Build a community center, particularly Fire House 23 has been sitting there for a couple of years</i> <i>2. Help the youth here that are coming in</i> <i>3. The families are increasing</i> <i>4. Decrease homelessness through music and film</i> <i>5. A lot of good people out there looking for help</i> <i>6. Housing is disgusting down here</i> <i>7. The drugs,.. when you step outside is like blinders on. That’s the major problem here.</i> <p><i>Until we fix that, there is nothing we can do to move forward in a positive fashion. I would like to help incorporate change by helping the young people instill a program to help every single person who has a tent outside to have their own business by next year.”</i></p>	<p><u>Problems in Skid Row are:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No community center -Limited help for youth -Increase of families -Support for culture/ arts -Deplorable housing -Drugs -Lack programs to move people toward independence

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General Jeff, Chair SRNC-Formation Committee	<p>Video5@03:49secs</p> <p><i>“...The <u>Salvation Army Project</u> on 5th Street and Stanford... It’s on the agenda to discuss... Seeing that these folks did not show... we will go to the emails I have regarding this project... The new owner is proposing to create the “Efficient City Apartments” which will consist of market rate micro-units in this building, 132 units between 200 to 300 sq ft; really small. The average price would be about \$1,000/month, and they are calling that affordable housing because they are going after students who cannot afford the \$3-\$5,000/month rent in the skyscrapers ... condos in downtown. So, in their eyes these are affordable market rate housing. ... We need to weigh in as a community on this housing project that’s in our community which is a block away from the Fred Jordon Mission.... In the project, there will be a total of 160 units with an average of 240 sq ft; 28 units for homeless vets (not specifically for homeless vets in Skid Row).”</i></p>	<p>Proposed affordable housing in Skid Row</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 240 sq ft - \$1,000/month - “Efficient City Apartments” micro-units

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Louise (“Frenchy”)	<p>Video5@12:05secs</p> <p><i>“Why would they come into a homeless community and build a project that will <u>NOT benefit the community</u>? That’s what people do! They come in and take over. They kick people to the curb. This is not going to happen!”</i></p>	<p>“Efficient City Apartments”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not benefit Skid Row community
Kevin Michael Key	<p>Video5@13:00secs</p> <p><i>“... The thing that I would say to everybody here. Skid Row has always been organized. That’s why Skid Row still exists today... If we do not want this project... We need to organize. Just like we stopped the New Genesis Project...We can <u>stop this project</u>, if it <u>ain’t in our best interest!</u>”</i></p>	<p>“Efficient City Apartments”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not in best interest of Skid Row residents
Yvonne Michelle Autry	<p>Video5@14:04secs</p> <p><i>“... against this project proposal because it <u>will not help</u> the Skid Row residents... These are micro lofts and they are not affordable, at least by our standards of affordability at \$1,000/month.”</i></p>	<p>“Efficient City Apartments”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not help Skid Row residents

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Tom Grode	Video5@14:46secs <i>“... I want to point out that the history of the building is that it was for the homeless... a homeless shelter...”</i>	Proposal counterproductive
Suzette Shaw	Video5@15:22secs <i>“... Have they actually researched to see if in Skid Row ... veteran housing is needed in the community...? Actually, there is a lot of supportive housing in the community that meet the needs of vets... I am concerned that people are chasing the dollars, and not creating the place where dollars need to go.”</i>	Not creating the right places Implication: Not utilizing money to match need
“OG” Manuel Benito Compito	Video5@16:19secs <i>“... We need to put together a planning committee... to speak out and represent us...”</i>	Need Skid Row resident planning committee

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Don Petrosky Garza	<p>Video5@17:13secs</p> <p><i>“... The hotels here need to be rehabilitated... These buildings and hotels need to go to the people on the streets... We need to continue to rehab the last hotels in Skid Row... for the people in Skid Row.”</i></p>	Need to rehab hotels in Skid Row for Skid Row people
John Malpede LA Poverty Department	<p>Video5@19:05secs</p> <p><i>“... They refer to the project as Skid Row adjacent “and” the Seafood District... (people erupt in laughter)... That’s the kind of misinformation that is out there.”</i></p>	<p>Misinformation about location of “Efficient City Apartments” in Skid Row</p> <p>Implication: Potential fraud; funds & resources miss-use</p>
Red	<p>Video5@20:25secs</p> <p><i>“... We know the vets need to be covered... ain’t nobody mad with the vets. Who’s proposing this over here... for \$1,000/month... but, once again... They are doing it again... They are not going to listen... We the ones need to change this....”</i></p>	Not listening to Skid Row residents

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Attendees Name	Summary Content SRNC – Formation Committee Meeting	Analysis
General Jeff Personal Opinion	<p>Video5@21:07secs</p> <p><i>“Also, let me just say, when I saw their presentation they had zero security plan. So their parking lot is immediately across from Catch 21... There is no security gate. There is no security guard. They say they probably will have cameras, and that they are working on this...talking to LAPD. Last month, I went to the C-PAB meeting at the Weingart Center, which is the Central Police Advisory Board. So the Central Division Captains Oreb and [Mr.] Brady Metcalfe are co-chairs. Officer Joseph and all the senior leads were there. After the meeting I pulled Captain Oreb to the side and said, what is LAPD’s position on the ‘Efficient City Apartments?’ He said, <u>“I didn’t know anything about it.”</u>... So, there is no security plan. And, as far as the veterans’ housing, there was no social service provider partner named... We don’t know if there are going to be onsite services, or are they just going to drop keys in their hands!... That’s why we really wanted them to make a presentation to us, so we can ask the probing questions to really help them out. So, they can understand...</i></p>	Grave concern about “Efficient City Apartments” lack of a security plan

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Attendees Name	Summary Content SRNC – Formation Committee Meeting	Analysis
General Jeff Personal Opinion continued	Video5@21:07secs <i>“Personally, my concerns are they are going to have these... <u>students</u> that really do not know anything about our community, drop them right there on 5th and Gladys, and we all know what that is. It’s like dropping sheep in the lion’s den. All of a sudden bad things are going to happen. And, it will be a bad reflection on our community, and the positive things that we are trying to do. And me, I am concerned about the safety of potential residents.”</i>	Concern about student’s safety at the “Efficient City Apartments”

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Attendees Name	Summary Content SRNC – Formation Committee Meeting	Analysis
General Jeff, Chair SRNC-Formation Committee	<p>Video5@23:28secs</p> <p><i>“Discussion is over. Let’s vote..... All who support “Efficient City Apartments” please raise your hands... (No hands)...</i></p> <p><i>All who <u>oppose</u> “Efficient City Apartments” please raise your hands... (Approximately 48 hands were raised). <u>Unanimous.</u></i></p> <p><i>Okay. As the chair, I will officially put together a letter... so it will get in on the files for that project...</i></p>	Community voted: <u>Not supportive</u> of the “Efficient City Apartments” Proposal
Yvonne Michelle Autry	<p>Video6@00:06sec</p> <p><i>“...One hundred and forty eight (148) units are being made available under affordable housing at \$1,000/unit. That’s not affordable. I cannot afford that housing. .. So, add that to the record.”</i></p>	“Efficient City Apartments” - <u>not affordable</u>

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Attendees Name	Summary Content SRNC – Formation Committee Meeting	Analysis
Suzette Shaw	<p>Video6@01:29secs</p> <p><i>“I was at the Homelessness Prevention Summit in the last couple of months... it was put on by LA County... I talked to the chair about this project ... and he said, “‘Oh, that’s the City. That’s not us’.” You know, they tend to say that’s not us. That’s them. And, then we go to the other ones. And, they say, that’s not us that’s them. Yet, they all are connected on some level, and somehow they are all working behind the scenes together... We must hold our elected officials accountable for this community.... They put on a \$100 million dollar “dog and pony” show as far as making <u>affordable housing emergency housing</u>, and yet at the same time not allocating dollars and space... when they should be putting it toward our community.”</i></p>	<p>Skid Row residents get the run around from both, City and County</p> <p>City and County accountability for Skid Row to create affordable & emergency housing</p>

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Attendees Name	Summary Content SRNC – Formation Committee Meeting	Analysis
General Jeff, Chair	<p>Video9@02:05secs</p> <p><i>"We are on one topic, the boundaries of Skid Row."</i></p>	Skid Row Boundaries
Greg Roberts LA CAN	<p>Video9@02:18secs</p> <p><i>"I'm Greg Roberts, LA CAN. I wanted to ask you... why you said, it was undisputed about 7th Street as a boundary."</i></p>	
General Jeff, Chair SRNC-Formation Committee	<p>Video9@02:33secs</p> <p><i>"The City of LA has determined... 3rd to 7th to Main to Alameda; ... and as a community activist we have accepted that as the 50-block community of Skid Row ... So moving forward, we were going to start our border conversation with the Skid Row Neighborhood Council -Formation Committee... to talk about the same borders. That's where we are going to start the conversation. So, if we were to write on the application, there is nobody that would be fighting us for 7th Street. There would be no fight over Alameda... 3rd to 7th to Alameda; we are not worried about that. There would be a little contention on 3rd Street, and a lot of contention on Main Street."</i></p>	Open community discussion about Skid Row borders

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Attendees Name	Summary Content SRNC – Formation Committee Meeting	Analysis
Yvonne Michelle Autry	Video9@04:33secs <i>“I think that the borders are adequate... I don’t think the borders need to be expanded at all...”</i>	Skid Row borders as is
Deacon Alexander	Video9@05:40secs <i>“... borders are meaningless... irrelevant... The border discussion is only for application purposes... Once we submit the application. We have to define geographically what you are about. Other than that, the borders don’t mean nothing! Meaningless!.. It has absolutely no meaning whatsoever in our everyday lives. It’s only for application purposes...”</i>	Skid Row borders useful for the application process
General Jeff – Chair SRNC-Formation Committee	Video9@06:08secs <i>“Now, let me respond to Brother Deacon. Because, I appreciate your attention and your passion but, I actually beg to differ with what you are saying. Because once we establish our boundaries wherever they are, whether it is a planning initiative, or it is new housing project that goes up, we get ...</i>	Clarification, Skid Row borders critical to community input into decision making within jurisdiction

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Attendees Name	Summary Content SRNC – Formation Committee Meeting	Analysis
General Jeff – Chair SRNC-Formation Committee continued	Video9@06:08secs <i>“...to weigh in on that. If we say our boundaries stop at Main Street, and if anything goes on over there, we do not get to weigh in on that. So, it is more than just filing out language on an application... It’s a matter of where is our jurisdiction and what can we weigh our voices in on, in relation to geographical areas.”</i>	Clarification, Skid Row borders critical to community input into decision making within jurisdiction
Male in light gray shirt, sitting in second row, facing the front on the life side of room	Video9@06:53secs <i>“What can be most effective is regarding borders as an administrative thing... We can go to all of our neighboring Neighborhood Councils and be a part of them. We do not need to be pushing, squabbling about our borders... We can be equally active with every Neighborhood Council we choose. Neighborhood Councils are for ‘stakeholders.’ Stakeholders are someone who has an interest in that area. We are all stakeholders in anywhere we have an interest in.”</i>	Skid Row community members are viable stakeholders and have a right to participation in the decision making process

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General Jeff – Chair SRNC-Formation Committee	<p>Video9@07:28secs</p> <p><i>“And, just to piggyback off of that... I have had recent discussions with people in the Arts District... They threw it out there at us saying... maybe we may want to break away from the Arts District Neighborhood Council and come together with Skid Row and start a ‘Skid Row Arts District Neighborhood Council’... interesting... Again, there are a lot of options... There are a lot of moving parts... We gotta figure out what we want to do and how we want to do it....”</i></p>	Many options for Skid Row Neighborhood Council formation structure – Skid Row community must decide
Tom Grode	<p>Video9@08:30secs</p> <p><i>“We are talking about literal boundaries that will have legal authorities, governmental authorities. But, I think there is another issue in which some folks are touching on, which is the history of downtown. If you look at the history of Skid Row... it’s normal to talk about Pershing Square... There is clearly an effort as downtown develops, as decisions are made... to basically eliminate that history. So, I think there are two things happening. We have to have a discussion about boundaries.</i></p>	Skid Row community has history and culture – which must & will remain

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Tom Grode continued	Video9@08:30secs <i>“That is legal. That is governmental. And, at the same time we have to have a historic cultural conversation about what has been Skid Row over the past 20, 30, 40...100 years. The relationships with downtown, relationships and the facts about the containment zone. There is so much here... I think it is a big mistake to minimize any of it... I don't want to see people think that because we are talking about the legal boundaries that means we are trying to minimize the heritage, or history, or the culture.”</i>	Skid Row historic culture is critical – must not be lost in the discussions
General Jeff, Chair SRNC-Formation Committee	Video9@09:49secs <i>“Excellent points....”</i>	Skid Row borders give the homeless representation in the 50-block boundary conversations

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Charles Porter	<p>Video9@10:12secs</p> <p><i>“Another consideration when we talk about Skid Row is, ‘What is Skid Row?’ When we talk about the boundaries, this one thing that came up a lot in the hearings regarding businesses on Main Street. They were saying, ‘This is not Skid Row anymore.’ But, one of the elements of Skid Row also is services/ resources that support the Skid Row community. I think that is part of it when we look at the boundaries... Where is the housing located? Where are the social services? This entire network, Tom mentioned Pershing Square, but the parts that people utilize I think that is... the discussion. And, we know there is a concentration of the low-income housing resources and social services. Where are they <u>located, outside of the legal boundaries</u>... Skid Row is a historically known community. But, some people are like saying, ‘What is Skid Row?’ ‘Where is Skid Row?’ That’s another part of it. Where are the services located? Where are the housing located? Michael mentioned Main Street has a lot of services. That’s why we need to keep the boundaries in our discussions. ”</i></p>	Services and resources most people utilize - outside legal boundaries of Skid Row

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Andreea Teodorescu	Video9@12:32secs <i>“... Main Street and Los Angeles Street are important because look what happened with the Cecil. The Historic District took it over... The King Edward Hotel, The Baltimore Hotel... rent’s at \$1,000/month, even on Craig’s list. The rent is going up and up. This is not low-income or affordable.”</i>	Rent high in Skid Row Implication: Rent not low-income or affordable

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Attendees Name	Summary Content IAB Subcommittee Agenda Discussion	Analysis
General Jeff Subcommittee Chair	<p>Video10@15:52secs</p> <p><i>“Thank you. Well said. Great community points being made that must go on record, especially because of unresolved issues...”</i></p> <p><i>#3. On this agenda we laid out suggested topics that we wanted a report back on... just quickly:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Confirm the Skid Row Containment Zone Policy; Determine LA County’s role in creation of said containment policy- Confirm LA County’s Board of Supervisors (BOS) ability to declare a “State of Emergency” type status... and subsequent funding possibilities- Confirm LA County’s specific roles and duties in LAHSA City & County collaborative; Explore possible option of dissolving partnership- Explore and determine how many housing units are needed to build from ground up to house the reported over 44,000 homeless persons in LA County as listed in the LAHSA Homeless Count	Unresolved Skid Row community issues

Summary Content Analysis Discussion

V. Diane Woods, DrPH

Sign-in sheets identified 60 registrants. Review of the 10 video recordings of the three and one half hour meeting demonstrated that participants arrived on time, of which 95% remained for the majority of the meeting. Diversity of participants ranged across ethnicities, age and gender. From information shared during the meeting, Skid Row participants verbalized significant interest in community affairs. Resident attendance and participation is relevant because Skid Row individuals have historically been presented in a negative context.

Participants consistently voiced concerns regarding decisions made about their community without input from Skid Row residents. In-depth expressions regarding the complexity of homelessness in Skid Row indicated a dynamic interplay between multi-factorial and multi-level interactions and the environment, resident, and established ineffective systems level.

In response to residents expressed concerns, corrective actions must mirror complex systemic dynamics that simultaneously address social ecological issues with measurable outcomes on physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs of the homeless and extremely poor residents in Skid Row.

Implications for comprehensive plans to address homelessness in Los Angeles County, specifically in Skid Row, at minimum must design an integrated system that is functional to first intervene in urgent needs, and secondly focus on long-term prevention of homelessness. Urgency of actions was a constant mantra related to complex issues. Suggestions on how to eliminate homelessness in Skid Row were based on resident's practical and lived experiences.

At this December 22, 2015 community meeting, irrespective of ethnicity participants expressed similar specific detailed solutions for homelessness as documented in the 2012 State Department of Public Health statewide California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP) African American Population Report, ***"We Ain't Crazy! Just coping With a Crazy System: Pathways into the Black Population for Eliminating Mental Health Disparities"*** (Woods, et al.) funded by Proposition 63 (the Mental Health Service Act). Reference is made to information shared by Skid Row residents in a case study on pages 195 to 204. Residents identified environmental, psychological, social, and system change recommendations that have the potential to address immediate needs of the homeless and to create multi-level changes to eliminate homelessness.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Pages/OHECaliforniaReducingDisparitiesProjectPhaseI.aspx>

Another reference to Skid Row residents as community change agents toward self-determination is documented in the *“Skid Row Resident’s Planning Initiative”* as published by ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS in November 2015.

CONCLUSION

In a time where homelessness is a priority concern across LA County, as a Subcommittee on Homelessness, we feel confident that we have created as extensive a report possible to help provide a real-time update and analysis of the current and on-going state of homelessness which plagues our great County with the intent to ensure that the integration process will be on track to be responsive to the needs of its weakest and most vulnerable residents.

The integration of the Department of Mental Health, Department of Health Services and Department of Public Health is of great concern to our Subcommittee.

We anticipate our first-ever report being utilized to help all those concerned with homelessness- from the decision-makers to the homeless individuals and families themselves- with the intention of advancing the overall homeless

conversation by establishing a never-before-seen level of communication using the combination of a style and method which speaks in multiple directions about different layers of homelessness all at the same time.

As we previously stated in this report, we fully expect to continue to represent to the best of our abilities by incorporating the collective voice of homeless persons and families from other parts across LA County in order to equally share the concerns of our fellow residents and consumers, and provide relevant real-time substantive input to positively impact the County's proposed actions, activities, operations, and health-related system-wide integration processes.

We are satisfied with our efforts thus far.

The people have spoken!

**General Jeff, Chair
LA County IAB
Subcommittee on Homelessness
January 27, 2016**